

**PRICE OF PERSONAL BALANCE
END OF YEAR REVIEW**

by

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At the end of a difficult year, for most of us, I would like to review what values and resulting strategies I have come to trust in, and try to adhere to, during the past days and months. This is not meant to be moralizing, proselytizing or in any way blatant self-rightness, it is simply a series of thoughts as we face another year of decision making in complex times.

I would like to begin my review of the price tag we all pay for our daily existence by looking at a few basic assumptions. I hold, and sometimes find myself clinging to, these beliefs not just for philosophic guidance but fundamental survival. Enough said here is what I believe. I present it for your consideration.

Here is a list of considerations I have everyday, which I feel, will help provide two important essentials. They're designed to help keep me focused on the here and now, and to provide a greater perspective of the price tags paid to live, an intense life, that is required to be successful.

In essence the question we all face are ones regarding balance. What do I need to do daily to find and maintain a healthy equilibrium between work, family and personal objectives? The following moreover, may help to repress and even dispel homicidal or suicidal feelings that naturally occur around our "happy holiday" times.

Needless to say this question can be looked at regarding many people's daily struggle to find harmony in a busy lifestyle. The list of ten items that are in fact the essence of thousands of people's conclusions and years of laments that usually contained the message of *"If only I had,"* or *"I wish I had known,"* or *"Things would be different now if I had done this..."*

Let me paraphrase a comment attributed to the late U.S. Senator Paul Tsongas, who suffered and died from lymphoma. *"No one on his deathbed ever says, I wish I had spent more time on my business."* I said: *"A few people say I wish I had spent more time at the office."* The message is the same. Be here and now, live here and now, enjoy here and now that's all we have got. Here's what I have been tough and continue learning in my 40 plus years of clinical practice.

1. ***Clear boundary setting***
(what I will and will not do)

Perhaps the biggest contributor to stress and family breakdown is failure to set clear boundaries. When pressed to over extend or simply disregard personal boundaries, it is only a matter of time until there will be some sort of system failure. Either with our mind, body or in our relationships. Of this, there is NO doubt. You know what will happen when you block one of the basic systems in the body. There will be increased pressure, followed by system breakdown and then death. What makes you think intra-psychic, psychophysical and interpersonal systems are different in any other way?

Perhaps the good news about you is ultimately the bad news in the long run. Your power and focus can end up as the basis for your own system break down. For many people their need to be strong (sometimes unconscious need) is their greatest weakness. This strategy, like so many, usually comes from early childhood experiences when we said to ourself, *"I'll never let myself be put in a situation like that one again (insert traumatic event here) where I was overpowered by another and forced to do something fundamentally against my will."*

Know this, you may verbally and consciously say yes to over stepping your boundaries, or letting others do so, but it will come back on you one way or another. In the end you can count on this fact.

2. ***Be here and now***

(with all the good and bad news that implies)

It is important to be in the moment. It's simple without a capacity to concentrate, catastrophe may be only a move or micro second away when you say what you see and feel. When you drive home, how much of the intensity and pressure do you bring home?

How much of there and then generally permeates your personal life in the here and now. Lack of concentration and participation with equally important issues at home can wreck a marriage and derail happiness into a psychological ditch. Sometimes the events we perceive drive us into our basic strategies for survival such as most people's old standby, denial.

There are many other personal approaches to avoid that, which we do not want to see. All work, to some degree, or they would not be used and all have price tags associated with their use. That price tag is living fully in the now. Think about any wonderful time in your life. One thing is sure, and that was that you were fully living in there here and now.

3. ***Trust your feelings***

(accept them over others' reality)

Your feelings are never wrong. When we get married to our misperceptions, we often become divorced from reality. Check with your family for feedback on this one if you doubt my words.

The point is simple when you experience any feeling. It is because your perceptual field tells you that this is THE reality. The reaction to that perception should always be tempered with the awareness that it is simply one person's reality and not "the truth from on high."

For some people this is a hard lesson to learn. Your day is full of hours of thinking and later acting on the truth you see with your eyes. If all people's perceived reality was right all of the time, their pencils would come without erasers. We all still need that little rubber thing. Walt Whitman said it well in his poem Leaves Of Grass, "*You shall listen to all sides, and filter them from yourself.*"

4. ***Be able and willing to make contact***
(and in your own way)

Regardless of how you put it, we all need and want contact. For some people contact is superficial. While for others, it must be deep and profound. The determining factor is the programming of our human bio-computer. Early experiences teach us the value and safety associated with this basic human need.

If our initial contact with our mother and father was problematic, then we learn to defend ourselves from the perceived danger associated with contact. Even as we protect ourselves from contact, we still long for it. Sometimes we seek it out in short-term intense superficial relationships. This strategy usually ends up generating more heat than light. When strung together, others may look on with envy. However, loneliness is usually festering inside, like a progressive insidious disease that grows worse as darkness falls.

Genuine contact requires a major investment that most want, and some simply can't give. Real contact is deep, and yet as simple as a glance from a child. Make a commitment to have it in your life or simply be prepared to pay the price.

"All truths wait in all things; they neither hasten their own delivery, nor resist it; They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon; The insignificant is as big to me as any; (What is less or more than a touch?)"

Leaves Of Grass. 1900. Walt Whitman.

I think he had it right, "What is more than a touch?."

5. ***Say what you feel***
(value being clear over being liked)

Sometimes we say things that are untrue because it is expedient or simply easier. This strategy can become a type of insulation from contact and pressure, but there is a price tag in this approach to others.

My speculation is that many people do not see themselves as the “warm and fuzzy” type. For the most part it is not the hard truth that is the problem, facts are facts. Right? It is the emotional truth that is sometimes seen as insurmountable.

Talking about deeper feelings is often the big challenge for many people. Learning how to or simple making it a priority will not necessarily make life easier, but it will add more depth and hence, more potential meaning.

6. ***Be open to difference***
(hear things hard to hear, while keeping your mouth shut and mind open)

This is perhaps one of the most difficult things to do for bright, logical people with kids. The ultimate testing grounds are our children, who see us as someone who does not understand, or as an organic ATM machine that does not always work properly.

Relationships go south when a person finds himself or herself married to or involved with a, “*Mr. or Mrs. Know It All*”. The remark, “*Often wrong but never in doubt*”, fits many of those who reign supreme at work, but falter with their family.

Our reaction to difference is perhaps one of the biggest problems we face on planet earth. The ability to be open to divergent feedback is the key to opening the door to harmony. Be it international, national or on a personal level it is essential to find ways to open the closed mind.

For some it requires an in-depth review of how our bio-computer got programmed, and then making a subsequent plan to reverse this devastating approach, to the ones we love while they are still there.

The closed mind may be factually right, and may win the battle but will probably lose the war for love and understanding. If this relates to you do what I suggested, organize, fight, and win with a new approach to dealing with difference.

7. *Respect yourself*

(never do what I know inside is not right)

If you think about it, most all of us know right from wrong and what we really need and want. If this is true, and I believe it is true, why are so many people unhappy and doing such stupid things, that ultimately is not what they really want to do?

Many people get respect from job performance and the reorganization that goes with it. This is true for many perhaps most of us. Some people build up their position by standing on the shoulders of others. Pushing them down as they elevated themselves or so they think. These people are ubiquitous and are found in all professions and walks of life unfortunately.

Insecurity is the breeding ground for this way of life. Self-respect translates operationally into true *respect for self* and that translates into actions that give respect to others.

8) *Never lie to Yourself*

(about needs, desires or motivations)

Winston Churchill called it, "*Terminological inexactitude*". Some call it "*disingenuous behavior*," while others call it just plain "*lying*." Regardless of how colorful or exact the language, we are all guilty of self-delusion at different times to varying degrees.

In William Shakespeare's Hamlet, Polonius's tells his son Laertes, "*To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.*"

It is hard to live life with "clinical logic" as a daily foundation of decision-making, and have a personal life that may run on an entirely different primacy. Human interaction clouds clarity much of the time. And to the analytical mind, denial and distance provide solace and sanctuary until logic can provide security once again within us.

I believe very strongly that a relationship is always getting better or worse. The direction of the arrow is the harbinger of happiness. Being able to see that direction in time can save a marriage, and provide a deeper meaning to life.

I encourage you to read my book Relationships. A Survival Guide and take the "Goodfield Interpersonal Values Evaluation test" with your personal partner and have an open discussion of the arrow's direction.

9. ***Be who you are now***
(but be able and willing to change)

For some this is not a problem. What may be something to consider is how open you are to change within yourself. And how aware am I of the possible need to make that change in my life.

I think one of the biggest sins of which a person can be guilty is to believe their, "*Terminological inexactitude*" or their own B... S... When people around us constantly reinforce an image (not necessarily a reality), it is easy to believe the image over what we deep down inside know as the truth.

We all wear daily different "hats". Husband, wife, parent, teacher, boss, etc., those "hats" can generate confusion sometimes as they give clarity to others. Moreover, the "fit" can fluctuate on a daily basis.

Our identity changes with time. It is usually subtle, and in that sense requires periodic re-evaluation regarding goals and objectives. Motivations and meanings often evolve as well with subtlety. Our core usually remains stable, but the payoff we get out of giving is important to balance against who we are, and where our direction is taking us.

10. *Be your own best friend*
(be kind, caring & loving to others)

This implies you know who you are first of all. “Are you your own best friend?” Being your own best friend is directly related to other important people in your life, and their ability to love and have deep contact with you. There is such a thing as “healthy narcissism”. However; the “other” type of “narcissism” gets such a bad rap, that the suggestion of the words makes some people pull their head back like a turtle under attack. A healthy appreciation of who you are is a good thing. This idea is such a major problem with some people of major religious faiths, as well as many Northern Europeans.

When the hub of any wheel is unstable or not “true” or in balance, the whole wheel’s performance will suffer. So it is with people. Our stability relates to our own ability to manage all of the divergent pressures and expectations of the day, and this is so true for most of us.

When consumed in a vortex of time and expectation, it is wise to stop sometime to take an accurate assessment of what you are doing, and what it costs you to do it.

Concluding thoughts

I have said and will continue to say -the person you can be, and the skills you have honed and continue to improve daily, are what set you apart from others. It is not just the lives you impact daily; many people in other walks of life affect their world in a profound way with their actions also.

For those I have had the honor to meet in workshops, lectures or in a personal setting, your presents in my life have made my world a better place in which to live.

May 2014 bring you all the happiness, health and prosperity you so rightfully deserve.

Happy New Year to you and yours,

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Glendale, 12/31/2013

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